

# Trading Annapolis for Baghdad

## Brown prepares for deployment to Iraq

by Sonlyrea Tate

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*The Gazette* 6/25/04

House Majority Whip Anthony G. Brown, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve, is expecting to be deployed to Iraq.

Assigned as an attorney in a civil affairs unit, Brown (D-Dist. 25) of Mitchellville will be activated on July 12 to begin pre-deployment training at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin until Aug. 10. Then, he said, he is likely to be mobilized to Fort Bragg, N.C., where he could be assigned to a unit already in Iraq or his entire unit could be deployed.

Sometimes units are sent home from the mobilization station, but Brown said it is highly likely he will be sent to Iraq.

"I call it a rapidly evolving situation. Almost every other day I'm getting more information about the likelihood of deployment," Brown said. "The likelihood is that I will miss one [General Assembly] session. I think it's likely that I will miss all of the 2005 session."

Earlier this month, Brown told *The Gazette* about his possible deployment, and seemed excited, like a boy going off to a sporting event for the first time.

"Yes, I'm excited. I'm very excited," he said at the time in an interview at the 10th Legal Support Organization headquarters in Clinton, near Andrews Air Force Base.

"Anyone who has served in the armed forces would understand. ... Soldiers don't hope for hostilities. They don't pray for war, but that's what we do. We train to perform various duties for war.

"When a good soldier is asked to serve, they do it with enthusiasm. We don't make the decision to deploy, but when that decision is made, with pride and enthusiasm, we take on that mission," he said.

Brown, a Harvard-trained lawyer, joined the Army for adventure.

He was elected to the General Assembly in 1999. This year, Brown was appointed vice chairman of the Judiciary Committee — a position he gave up last week for his new appointment. The delegate also works for a small law firm in Prince George's County.

Brown said his military service is in line with his work as a lawmaker, but he considers his military service a higher calling.

"I'm honored and I cherish being a member of the General Assembly, but serving in the Army is the most significant, the highest form of service," he said. "So I'm very enthusiastic to be able to serve."

Brown declined to discuss the politics of the war in Iraq. "We don't ask soldiers to be politicians," he said.

"What we ask our soldiers to do is do their jobs when we ask them to do it. ... You perform your mission as a soldier regardless of your politics."

Brown considers the call-up an "opportunity to give back to an institution" that has given him much.

He joined the Army 19 years ago, commissioned June 6, 1984, as a second lieutenant. He served five years and three months on active duty and the remaining years in the Reserve.

The primary mission of the military is to prevent conflict, Brown said.

"Our mission is to deter war, and when deterrence fails, the mission is to win war," he said. "Some units' mission is to seek out and destroy the enemy, but there is a mission for nation-building ... stabilizing and building infrastructure. My role is to go over there and serve as a legal adviser, to help restore and stabilize countries. That's my role."

Few lawmakers have requested extended leaves of absence to tend to military duties, so the state has no rules regarding their departure. Brown can keep his appointment as majority whip for as long as the speaker of the House, who appointed him, remains speaker. His family will continue to receive his state salary while he is away.

"We have no rules because we have no requests," said Andrea Fulton, executive director of Personnel Services and Benefits for the General Assembly. "We never had any reason to ask that question."

House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Dist. 30) of Annapolis said he will hold the majority whip position open until Brown's return if he is deployed.

"[Brown] earned his position here ... we're all proud of him. If he happens to be called upon, we'll be 100 percent support-

ive," Busch said. "When he returns, he'll resume his duties."

Two chief deputy whips and about a dozen associate whips can carry the workload in Brown's absence.

Life is changing quickly for the delegate. As he awaits official notice of his unit's deployment status, the new whip continues to receive congratulations from colleagues on his appointment to the powerful House position. And next week he will hold a fund-raiser as scheduled.

Then he expects to begin packing and proceed with arrangements for his wife, Patricia Arzuaga, and two children, Rebecca, 9, and Jonathan, 4, to manage in his absence.

Meanwhile, his daughter prays to God that the war will end; and his son, who calls his father "soldier buddy," enjoys daily hugs from Brown.